

Message Text

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ORIGIN PRS-01

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UNCLAS STATE 184269 TOSEC 080132

FOR HODDING CARTER FROM S/PRS

E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: SOPN, OVIP (VANCE, CYRUS R.)

SUBJECT:MORNING TRAVELLING PRESS SUMMARY, AUGUST 5

NO. 15

WIRE SERVICES

UPI -- ANDERSON FROM AMMAN

LEAD: "SECSTATE VANCE, HIS PEACE MISSION HOBbled BY SY-
RIA'S REJECTION OF A PRELIMINARY FONMINS MEETING, FLIES TO
JORDAN TODAY FOR TALKS WITH KING HUSSEIN."

OTHER POINTS:

-- VANCE'S HOPE FOR PRELIM MEETING DEALT "MAJOR, AND POS-
SIBLY FATAL, BLOW" THURSDAY NIGHT BY ASSAD.

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-- AFTER VANCE'S DEPARTURE, ARAB DIPLOMATIC SOURCES SAID

REJECTION NOT "AN OUTRIGHT OR FINAL REJECTION, BUT RATHER
A CONDITIONAL ONE." CONDITIONAL ON ISRAEL'S AGREEING TO
HAVE PLO REPRESENTED AT GENEVA.

-- WEST BANK'S FUTURE TO BE FOCUS OF TALKS WITH HUSSEIN.

--AARAB DIPLOMATIC SOURCES SAID ASSAD TOLD VANCE HE HAD NO
OBJECTION TO PRELIM TALKS WITHOUT PLO. BUT AFTER MEETING

VANCE, SADAT SAID TO PRESS "I SEE NO BENEFIT FROM SUCH A MEETING."

-- ISRAELI OFFICIALS WITHHELD COMMENT ON REJECTION.

-- VANCE TOLD REPORTERS THERE WERE "DIFFERENCES ON CERTAIN ITEMS," BUT GAP HAD BEEN NARROWED.

-- VANCE AND SADAT FELT ADMISSION OF PALESTINIANS TO NEGOTIATIONS A PROCEDURAL MATTER; ASSADT REITERATED ANY "REFUSAL OF PALESTINIANS' RECOGNITION IN A CONFERENCE" A DIRECT ATTACK ON PALESTINIAN RIGHTS.

REUTERS: GUTMAN FROM DAMASCUS (2NDLEAD AMMAN)

LEAD: "SECSTATE VANCE'S MIDEAST MISSION RAN INTO DIFFICULTY WHEN SYRIA REJECT A U.S.-EGYPTIAN PROPOSAL FOR PREPARATORY PEACE TALKS BETWEEN ARAB AND ISRAELI FONMINS."

OTHER POINTS:

-- ISRAEL WELCOMED PROPOSAL, SAYING IT COULD REPLACE GENEVA.

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-- SYRIAN SOURCE SAID ASSAD'S CALL FOR WELL-PREPARED GENEVA CONFERENCE MEANT THAT A MINIMUM OF AGREEMENT MUST BE REACHED ON ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM WEST BANK AND RECOGNITION OF PALESTINIANS RIGHTS, BEFORE GENEVA.

-- SAYING TALKS WITH VANCE HAD BROUGHT GENEVA NO CLOSER, ASSAD WITHAL WARMLY ENDORSED CARTER ADMIN'S EFFORTS FOR MIDEAST PEACE.

-- 'T WAS CLEAR ASSAD, AS OPPOSED TO BEGIN, STILL EXPECTED US TO WORK OUT BASIS FOR GENEVA ACCORD THROUGH MEDIATION.

-- ASKED BY REPORTERS WHETHER SYRIA WOULD SUPPORT SIMULTANEOUS EXCHANGE OF RECOGNITION BY ISRAEL AND PLO, ASSAD REPLIED RECOGNITION SHOULD COME FROM ISRAEL, AS IT HAS MORE "MARGIN OF MOVEMENT WHEREAS PLO REPRESENTS PERSECUTED AND DISPLACED PEOPLE."

-- 2ND LEAD NOTES STRICT SECURITY AT AMMAN AIRPORT UPON VANCE'S ARRIVAL.

ASSOCIATED PRESS: SCHWEID FROM AMMAN FONMINS, PLEDGED TODAY TO BUILD THE "NECESSARY CONSENSUS" FOR AN ARAB-ISRAELI SETTLEMENT.

OTHER POINTS:

-- VANCE SAID SEARCH FOR "JUST AND LASTING PEACE REMAINS AT THE TOP OF THE LIST IN TERMS OF OUR FOREIGN POLICY PRIORITIES IN THE U.S."

-- AFTER THURSDAY MEETING WITH VANCE, ASSAD SAID 'TAS BETTER TO CONCENTRATE AT THIS STAGE ON PREPARATIONS FOR GENEVA, WHERE "ESSENTIAL RIGHTS" OF PALESTINIANS SHOULD BE AFFIRMED.

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-- PROPOSAL FOR FONMINS MEETING HAD BEEN ONLY SOLID RESULT OF TRIP. U.S. OFFICIALS PRIVATELY CLAIMED OTHER NEGOTIATING ACCOMPLISHMENTS BUT REFUSED TO ELABORATE.

NEWSPAPERS

NY TIMES -- BERNARD GWERTZMAN FROM DAMASCUS (P-1)

LEAD: "ASSAD TODAY REJECTED AN EGYPTIAN PROPOSAL FOR CONVENING A MIDEAST WORKING GROUP OF ARAB AND ISRAELI FONMINS IN THE US NEXT MONTH ON THE GROUND THAT THE GROUP WOULD BE VIEWED AS COMPETING WITH A FULL-FLEDGED PEACE CONFERENCE IN GENEVA, WHERE HE SAID PALESTINIAN RIGHTS SHOULD BE RECOGNIZED."

OTHER POINTS:

-- ASSAD SAID HE FAVORED CONTINUED DISCUSSION TO INSURE GENEVA HELD. HIS OPPOSITION TO WORKING GROUP APPARENTLY BASED ON RELUCTANCE TO BYPASS PALESTINIANS.

-- GROUP NOW UNLIKELY TO MEET; ONLY US, EGYPT AND ISRAEL HAVE ENDORSED IT. JORDAN UNLIKELY TO DO SO IN FACE OF SYRIAN OPPOSITION.

-- EGYPTIAN OFFICIALS NOW SAYING GROUP WAS NOT MEANT TO BE PRELIMINARY CONFERENCE, JUST SERIES OF CONTACTS. THAT DILUTED CONCEPT DIFFERENT FROM US UNDERSTANDING OF SADAT PROPOSAL; SEEMS TO BE EGYPTIAN REACTION TO ANTICIPATED SYRIAN OPPOSITION.

-- PURPOSE OF WORKING GROUP WOULD HAVE BEEN TO KEEP UP MOMENTUM FOR PEACE IN VIEW OF FAILURE TO RESOLVE PLO
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QUESTION.

-- ASSAD DID NOT RULE OUT KHADDAM MEETING WITH VANCE AT UNGA, BUT THIS WOULD BE DIFFERENT FROM GROUP MEETING.

-- GENEVA CONFERENCE IN OCTOBER NOW SEEMS UNLIKELY, BUT VANCE AIDES SAID US WOULD NOT BE DETERRED FROM PEACE EFFORTS.

WASH POST -- DON OBERDORFER FROM DAMASCUS

LEAD: "ASSAD SAID TONIGHT THAT THE US PROPOSALS PRESENTED TO HIM BY SECSTATE VANCE CONTAIN NOTHING THAT IMPROVES PROSPECTS FOR A GENEVA PEACE CONFERENCE ON MIDEAST THIS YEAR."

OTHER POINTS:

-- ASSAD VIRTUALLY REJECTED SADAT WORKING GROUP PROPOSAL, SAYING IT WOULD BE BETTER TO GO TO GENEVA AFTER THOROUGH PREPARATION.

-- HE BLAMED ISRAEL RATHER THAN US FOR LACK OF PROGRESS, PRAISED CARTER ADMINISTRATION FOR ITS EFFORTS, AND APPEALED TO US TO PERSEVERE.

-- VANCE SAID LITTLE AFTER MEETING, NOTING ONLY THAT DIFFERENCES OF VIEW REMAIN. AFTER HIS STOPS IN SYRIA AND EGYPT, "THERE IS NO SIGN THAT VANCE HAS BEEN ABLE TO MAKE STRIDES TOWARD SOLUTION OF THE PALESTINIAN DEADLOCK, AND NO PUBLIC INDICATION THAT US PROPOSALS HAVE NARROWED THE SUBSTANTIVE GAP BETWEEN ARABS AND ISRAEL."

-- REJECTION OF WORKING GROUP APPEARS TO END THAT PROPOSAL, WHICH WAS NEVER CONSIDERED LIKELY POSSIBILITY BY US OFFICIALS. VANCE WAS "SURPRISED AND DISMAYED" WHEN IT UNCLASSIFIED

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BECAME MAIN FOCUS OF HIS STOP IN EGYPT. HE UNINTENTIONALLY FED SPECULATION BY POLITELY CALLING IT "EXCELLENT SUGGESTION" AFTER SADAT RAISED IT, BUT LATER, WHEN IT WAS EVIDENT HOW MUCH ATTENTION IT WAS GETTING, BACKED OFF AND PASSED WORD TO REPORTERS HE FELT IT SHOULD NOT GET MAJOR EMPHASIS. "THE PRESS, WITH LITTLE ELSE TO WRITE AND BROADCAST, KEPT 'WORKING GROUPS' NEAR THE TOP OF THE NEWS EVEN AFTER IT WAS CLEAR TO MANY REPORTERS THAT THE SUGGESTION WAS DOOMED OR MEANINGLESS OR BOTH."

-- EGYPT ITSELF BEGAN BACKING OFF. AL AHARAM SAID JOINT WORKING GROUPS NEVER INTENDED, ALTHOUGH SADAT HAD IMPLIED JUST THAT AT PRESS CONFERENCE.

-- WITH SADAT THOUGHT DESPERATELY EAGER FOR GENEVA, ASSAD HAS EMERGED AS MAIN PROTECTOR OF PLO, THOUGH SYRIAN ARMY WAS FIGHTING AND KILLING PALESTINIANS IN LEBANON LAST YEAR.

-- ASSAD SAID AT ONE POINT THAT IF ISRAEL WOULD RECOGNIZE RIGHTS OF ARAB PALESTINIANS AND RESPOND TO THEIR DESIRES WITHOUT DISCUSSIONS WITH THEIR REPRESENTATIVES, HE THOUGHT PLO WOULD NOT FIND ANYTHING DISTURBING IN THAT. HE DID NOT ENTIRELY CLOSE DOOR ON GENEVA DISCUSSIONS WITHOUT PLO IF PALESTINIAN RIGHTS OBSERVED.

-- AS COURTESY TO SADAT AND ASSAD, VANCE MAY MAKE BRIEF STOPS IN THEIR CAPITALS AFTER TALKING TO ISRAELIS.

WSJ -- BOB KEATLEY FROM DAMASCUS

LEAD: "ASSAD ALL BUT REJECTED EGYPTIAN PROPOSAL THAT MIDEAST FONMIN 'WORKING GROUP' BE ESTABLISHED TO PREPARE UNCLASSIFIED

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WAY FOR GENEVA PEACE CONFERENCE."

OTHER POINTS:

-- SAID HE DID NOT WANT GROUP TO BE LOOKED ON AS SUBSTITUTE FOR GENEVA.

-- MAY HAVE LEFT OPEN POSSIBILITY OF BEGINNING GENEVA WITHOUT PLO. IN INTERVIEW WITH ABC, HE SAID SYRIA MIGHT ATTEND TALKS WITHOUT PLO IF DOING SO WOULD SPEED ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL AND PROTECT RIGHTS OF PALESTINIAN PEOPLE.

-- STATEMENTS APPEARED CONTRADICTORY; PRECISE MESSAGE HE WANTED TO CONVEY WAS NOT CLEAR.

-- VANCE AND SPOKESMAN DESCRIBED TALKS ONLY WITH "DIPLOMATIC CLICHES" SUCH AS "USEFUL AND FRIENDLY."

-- CURRENT STATUS OF VANCE MISSION UNCERTAIN; WORKING GROUP IDEA HAS FOUNDERED, PERHAPS PARTLY DUE TO SYRIAN-EGYPTIAN FRICTION. BUT IF ASSAD REMARKS TO ABC REFLECT WHAT HE TOLD VANCE, MAJOR PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE.

-- MAJOR DIFFERENCES REMAIN IN ANY CASE, BUT ASSAD SAID HE WANTS US TO CONTINUE ITS BROKERING ROLE.

BALT SUN -- HANK TREWHITT FROM DAMSACUS (P-1)

LEAD: "PRESIDENT OF SYRIA REJECTED LAST NIGHT AN AMERICAN-EGYPTIAN PROPOSAL TO OPEN INFORMAL NEGOTIATIONS TOWARD A MIDEAST SETTLEMENT WITHOUT A ROLE FOR DISPLACED PALESTINIANS."

OTHER POINTS:

-- ASSAD REACTED ABOUT AS EXPECTED TO VANCE PROPOSALS,
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URGING CONCENTRATION ON REVIVING GENEVA. IN 6 HOURS OF
TALKS HE CONCEDED NOTHING BUT AVOIDED SHUTTING OFF DIP-
LOMATIC MANEUVERING NOW UNDER WAY. HE URGED US TO CONTINUE
ITS EFFORTS.

-- ASSAD APPEARED TO AVOID REFERENCES TO PLO, EMPHASIZED
RIGHTS OF PALESTINIAN PEOPLE.

-- VANCE HAD ADOPTED "WITH APPARENT ENTHUSIASM" SADAT
WORKING GROUP PROPOSAL, BUT US OFFICIALS MAINTAINED IT WAS
ONLY ONE OF SEVERAL PROPOSALS VANCE WAS CARRYING. WORKING
GROUP, HOWEVER, WAS ONLY ONE MADE PUBLIC, AND SYRIAN RE-
JECTION MADE US DIPLOMACY LOOK "LESS THAN REFINED."

-- VANCE AND ASSAD BOTH ASSESSED POSITIVELY THEIR TALKS,
IMPLYING THEY HAD PRODUCED GRIST FOR FURTHER NEGOTIATION.

-- ASSAD SEEMED TO LEAVE SEVERAL DOORS OPEN. SUGGESTION
FOR PREPARATIONS FOR GENEVA MIGHT BE INFORMAL SUBSTITUTE
FOR WORKING GROUPS; HE ALSO SAID PROBLEM OF PLO PARTICI-
PATION WOULD NOT ARISE IF ISRAEL RECOGNIZED RIGHTS OF
PALESTINIAN PEOPLE, BUT DID NOT ELABORATE.

-- HE APPEARED INFLEXIBLE ON OTHER ISSUES, SAYING ISRAEL
HAD TO WITHDRAW FROM ALL LAND OCCUPIED IN 1967. SOME
ANALYSTS, HOWEVER, SAY US AND SYRIA MAY BE CLOSER ON SOME
OF THESE ISSUES THAN THEY INDICATE PUBLICLY, "OR PERHAPS
CLOSER EVEN THAN THEY INDICATE TO EACH OTHER."

CHRISTOPHER

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